

'Umno, not Malays, under threat'
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Parti Keadilan Rakyat de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim said the 'Ketuanan Melayu' card increasing played up by Umno is to divert attention from the party's internal problems following its unprecedented setback in last month's general election. MCPX

The former Umno deputy president said this today at a hotel in Shah Alam when he was asked to comment on Utusan Malaysia's 'Ketuanan Melayu tercabar' front-page headlines in the Umno-owned newspaper.

anwar ibrahim vk lingam hearing pc 290108 talkingAt a gathering organised by newly formed Barisan B Tengku Faris Petra told the crowd that it was not appropriate for other ethnic groups to seek equality and privileges accorded to Malays.

"We didn't hear much about this (Malay rights) issue last month or before the elections. I believe their intentions are to divert the attention of everyone," said Anwar.

He said that instead of the 'Ketuanan Melayu' concept, the more important cause is 'Ketuanan Rakyat'.

"And when we say 'rakyat', it includes the Malays...especially the downtrodden ones and not the rich ones," said Anwar, who is former finance minister.

"Our approach should be to help the people who are sidelined, denied their rights and opportunities. As such, it should include Malays, Chinese, Indians and other Malaysians," he said.

Anwar added that he was confident that the opposition Pakatan Rakyat coalition will prove to be more effective in helping the people than Umno or the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition had been.

Mahathir and Jewish conspiracies

Commenting on previous prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's criticism of him and linking him with Jewish lobbies, the ex-deputy premier dismissed the suggestion as "ludicrous".

"He's (Mahathir) getting a bit too tired and confused. I've not been to any of the Jewish lobbies, (but) he has. I've not met any Israeli leader, but he has met... quietly, when he was prime minister."

mahathir and bush and jack abramoffAnwar added that his former boss was the one who had dealings with the Jews, pointing out the US\$1.2 million alleged to have been paid to disgraced American lobbyist Abramoff to arrange a meeting between Mahathir and US President George W Bush in 2002.

"He (Mahathir) should concentrate on his health and apologise to the people for his many atrocities. He also has to explain on how he destroy the judiciary, how he controlled the media, how he put hundreds of people under ISA (Internal Security Act) including Operation

Lallang.

"He should also explain his involvement in various corrupt practices, serious mismanagement, stealing government funds through the destruction of many government-controlled companies like Perwaja (Steel). I think it is better for him to deal with these issues," said Anwar.

"I've refrained for years from responding to him... But apparently he's very scared about this new phenomenon of people speaking up and wanting to see change.

Anwar also said that the former premier wants to ensure that his nominees take over to protect his and his family's interest.

Mahathir was reported earlier to have said, "He (Anwar) is the only prime minister that the Israelis would vote for" on Saturday.

He said that in response to a question on whether Anwar had any credibility to become prime minister.

Najib must be blamed too

On Mahathir's call for Abdullah to quit, Anwar said, "I've never taken Dr Mahathir's views very seriously for a long time.

"Of course, the prime minister cannot absolve himself from BN's setback but he led the election campaign together with Najib (Abdul Razak)," said Anwar.

umno 2007 agm wanita pemuda 061107 najib"Najib was spearheading the campaign and Abdullah is the prime minister, so both of them have to be accountable for their disastrous defeat."

On his plans to run for a parliamentary seat, Anwar reiterated that it was not important now as he wants to concentrate on strengthening the Pakatan coalition.

He said that for the time being he wants to help Pakatan to focus on good governance and improve the working relationship between the various parties within the opposition alliance.

"My personal career is not a priority at the moment as I've still got time," he added.

On prime minister and Umno president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's succession plan, Anwar was non-committal.

"Umno and the other main component parties are in turmoil now. Their best option now is to join Pakatan Rakyat," said Anwar.

Anwar is due to attend a rally in Sultan Sulaiman Club at Kampung Baru tomorrow to mark his return from political exile. His five-year ban from active politics ends on April 15.